



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

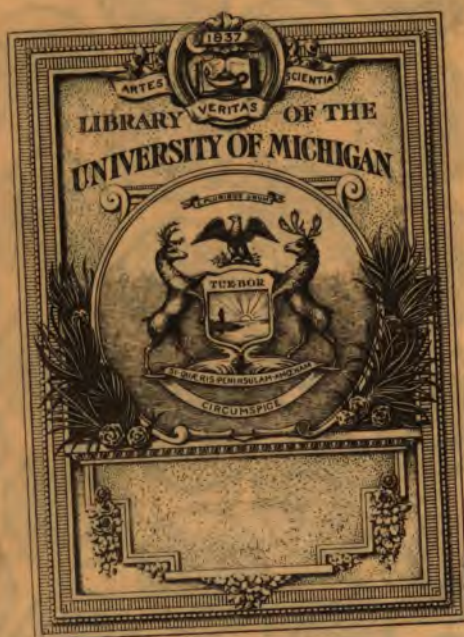
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

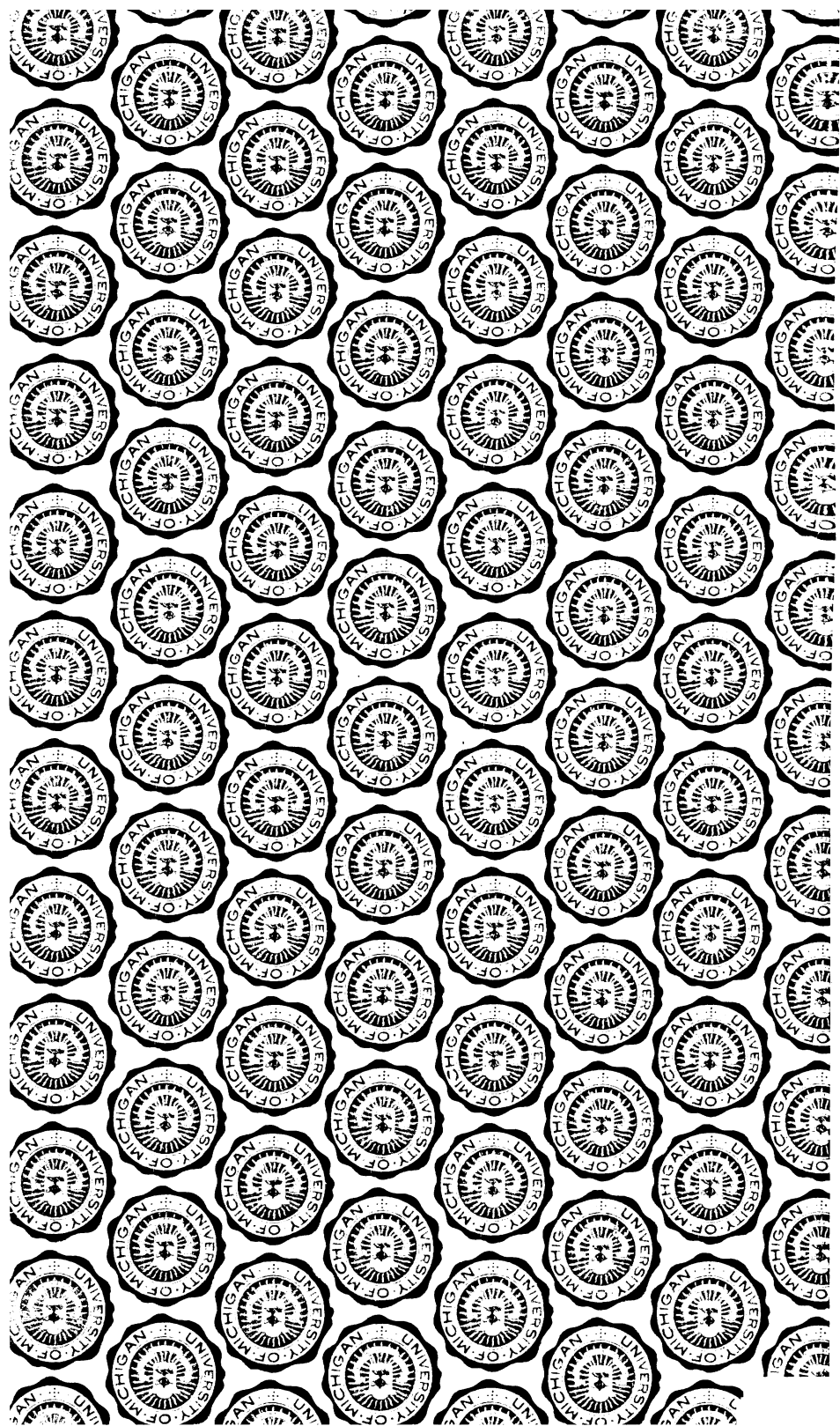
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

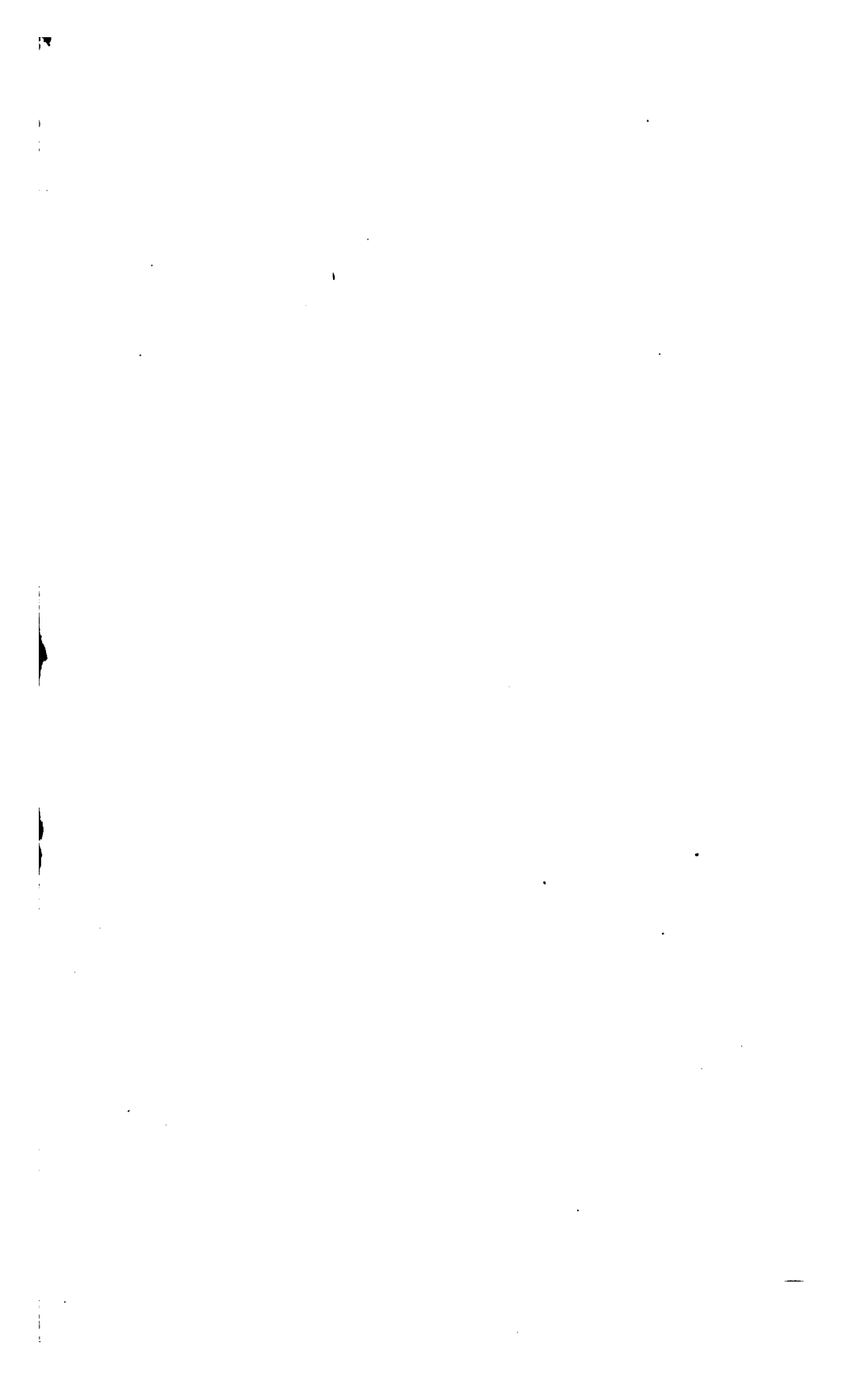
About Google Book Search

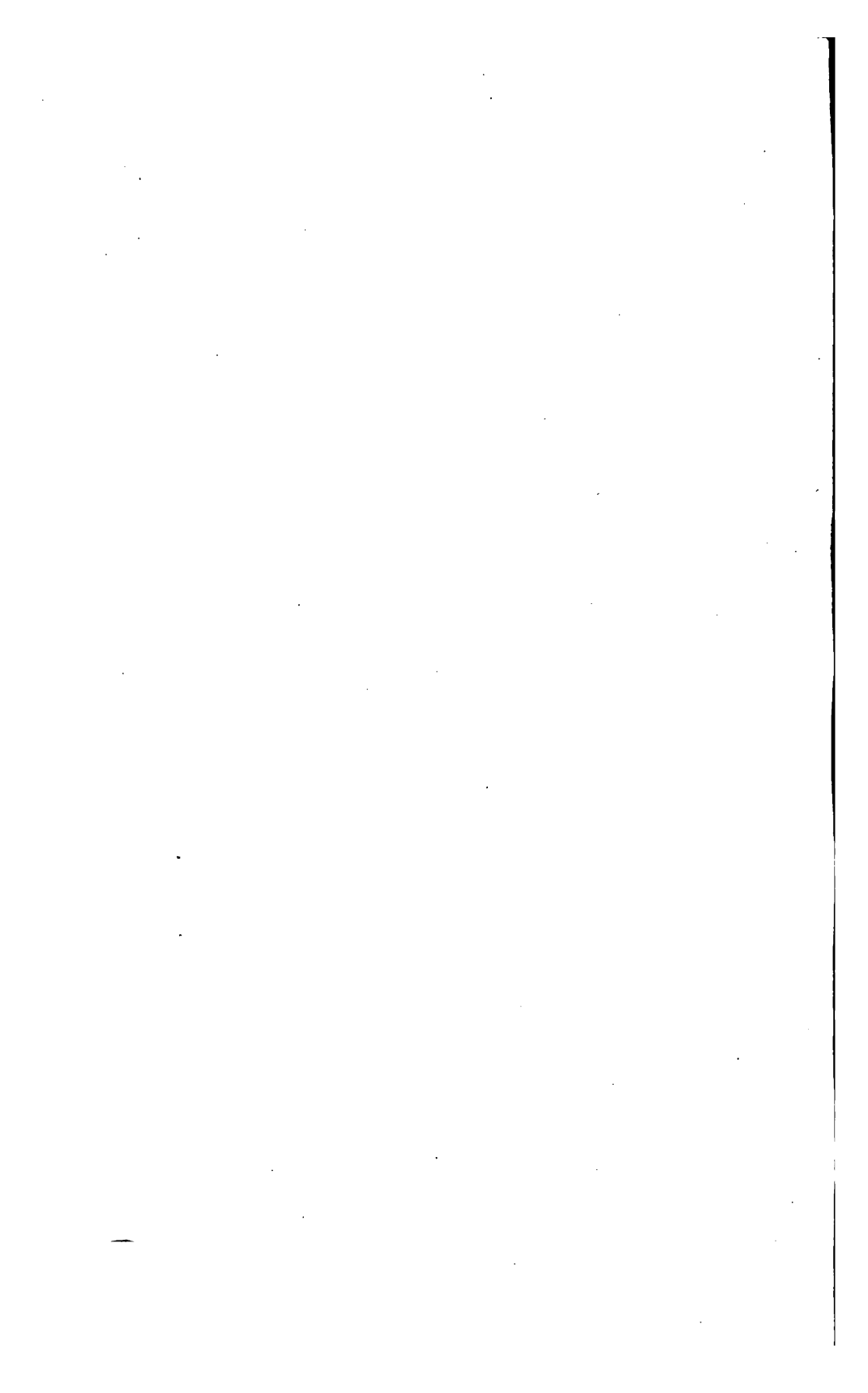
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





1. The first part of the document is a list of names and their corresponding addresses. The names are listed in a column on the left, and the addresses are listed in a column on the right. The names are: John Doe, Jane Smith, and Bob Johnson. The addresses are: 123 Main St, 456 Elm St, and 789 Oak St.





A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BEFORE

142

THE

LEGISLATURE OF VERMONT,

ON THE DAY OF

GENERAL ELECTION.

AT

MONTPELIER, OCTOBER 12, 1826.

BY REV. WILLIAM FISK, A. M. 1792-1839.

MONTPELIER:

PRINTED BY GEO. W. HILL, & CO.

1826.

73X
8333
.F54

Montpelier, Oct. 14, 1826.

Rev. WILLBUR FISK.

Sir,—In pursuance of a resolution of the House of Representatives, we have the honor of tendering to you the thanks of the House for your Election Sermon delivered before the Legislature, on the 12th inst. and request a copy for the press.

LUTHER B. HUNT,
WILLIAM CAHOON, } Committee.
DANIEL POMEROY, }

DISCOURSE.

JOHN, XVIII. XXXVI. *Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.*

IT has been to the discredit of the christian religion, and to the detriment of those nations who have embraced it, that the true relation existing between this religion and civil government, has not been generally understood. The Jews supposed, when the Messias came, he would exert his power and exercise his authority for their worldly advancement, and national aggrandizement. They supposed, in short, that he would come in the manner and with the authority of an earthly prince. But because Jesus of Nazareth came not thus, they would not acknowledge him. In vain did he endeavor to convince them by his spiritual teaching, his miraculous and divine power, and his benevolent works, that he was just such a teacher as they needed; and that, in his own way, he could bestow the greatest possible blessings upon their nation. They would not receive him. Their language was "we will not have this man to rule over us." In vain did he endeavor to correct their views, and bring them to a true sense of his government and authority, not only by his manner of asserting and exercising his authority,

but also, by expressly declaring to them, "the kingdom of God is within you." Or as in the language of the text, "My kingdom is not of this world." With a wicked consistency, they rejected both him and his saying. Thus their pride and worldly ambition deprived them of their only Savior and rightful Governor, and proved, in the end, their overthrow and dispersion.

With less consistency, but we fear, in many instances, with no less criminality, various nations, since that time, have professedly received Christ, but rejected his saying. They acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but they deny, that his "kingdom is not of this world." In their zeal, and in their professed attachment for Christ, they have come, like the multitudes in the days of his flesh, to "take him by force, and make him an *earthly* king." They have introduced his authority into civil government, and made use of his name to serve their worldly views, and carry on their political operations. In this way, they have done great injury both to the cause of Christ and of civil government. The former has degenerated into a mere system of outward forms, superstitious rights and disgusting bigotry; the latter has become oppressive and tyrannical; lording it, not only over men's civil rights, but also, over their consciences. Against all such unholy prostitutions and sacrilegious connections, this saying of our Lord

still stands opposed. "My kingdom is not of this world."

Of this, the more judicious, among modern politicians, have become convinced: and have made some successful efforts to break this unauthorized and unholy connection, between church and state, and place each on more independent ground. In doing this however, there is great danger of varying from the true point, by passing over to the other extreme. For the mind, in its changes, is like the vibrations of a pendulum, constantly, when it has left one extreme, tending to the opposite, with a momentum proportioned to its former distance from its proper point of rest. In breaking the improper union which has existed, in most christian governments, between church and state, men are in danger of losing sight of the true relation, which exists between them. They are apt to allow religion no share, in the establishment and preservation of good civil government. On this side, our danger as a nation, lies. We have not, it is true, in rejecting from our government a national hierarchy, and all ecclesiastical establishments, rejected, like some others, Christ and his religion altogether. But it is to be feared, our politicians are not sufficiently aware how much they are indebted to Christ's kingdom, for those excellent principles which form the basis of our political fabric; nor do they seem to be fully aware of the vast influence of this kingdom

in preserving this fabrick from ruin. The sentiment seems to be imbibed, by many, that, however true religion may be, and however good, in its place, it is of little or no use to the politician or his cause. Against this idea, as well as the opposite, the words of our text may be directed. For it is because Christ's kingdom is not of this world, in its origin, operations, influences and retributions, that it is of such eminent service, in all good governments. If it were of this world, it could only accomplish what the governments of this world can, and in the same imperfect way; but because it is not of this world, but of higher origin and nature, therefore it possesses superior advantages and superior influence to settle, regulate and enforce the mutual rights of those who govern, and of those who are governed. And on this, the well being of political society entirely depends.

To guard us against a criminal and dangerous indifference to the kingdom of Christ, in our political operations, by pointing out the proper relation between Christ's kingdom and the kingdoms of this world, so that the rights of each may be distinctly marked, their due share of independence recognized, and their alliance defined, will be the design of the present discourse.

It must be obvious to all who pay attention to the subject, that the terms, *kingdom of Christ*, *kingdom of Heaven*, *kingdom of God*, as used in

the new testament, especially by the evangelists, refer primarily, to the spiritual government of Christ over the hearts of men, through the influence of that gospel of which he was the author. And when Christ says of his kingdom, "it is not of this world," he should be understood to distinguish it from the *governments* of this world. The object of Pilot's question seems to have been, to ascertain whether Christ was a king. And the design of the answer was, not only to affirm that he was a king, but to assert, at the same time, that his authority and government were not like those of this world. Understanding this to be the import of the text, we proceed to show, in several propositions, how Christ's kingdom is distinguished from the governments of this world; and under each proposition, notice, that this difference renders the principles of Christ's kingdom of eminent service, to the well being of political society.

1st. Christ's kingdom is not of this world, in its origin. And in this respect, it stands distinguished from secular governments. It is true, it may be said, all good governments originate from God; "for the powers that be are ordained of God." But they do not originate from God, in the same sense with the kingdom of Christ. The governments of this world grow out of the peculiar circumstances of the people, and vary according to those circumstances, in different ages and different nations. Their laws are the

enactments of men, and are executed by men; and are therefore subject to all the imperfections incident to humanity. Not so with the kingdom of Christ. Jesus, the divine Saviour, is the immediate lawgiver, the Holy Spirit is the prime minister, and all the subjects stand immediately responsible to the court of Heaven. Hence this is perfect in its nature and operations, immutable in its principles, and paramount in its obligations. And as it comes from the source of infinite wisdom, it is perfectly adapted to man's character and condition. And therefore it must, by consequence, contain in itself, all the fundamental principles for the government of man, in all the possible relations of private, domestic, social and political life. For a government, such as infinite wisdom would prescribe for man in his present state, could not fail to take cognizance, not only of the soul, in its abstract nature, but of the whole man, in his compound nature of matter and spirit, and of all the various accidents and relations, growing out of that nature. Hence we discover the vast influence this kingdom must have, where its operations are felt. But it must be allowed to operate in its own way. It can never be blended, under the administration of men, so as to be made the mere creature of secular power. To this the original dignity of Christ's kingdom will never submit. It dictates, but it will not be dictated; it regulates, but it will not be regulated. Only let this kingdom alone; throw no obstructions in

its way, and like an invisible genius, it will operate with its superintending and guiding influence, pervading every part, and lending its salutary aid to all the laudable operations of political society. And in the mean time this kingdom can be aided by the secular arm, not by directing or restraining its movements, not by wielding carnal weapons in its support, but only by removing obstructions; by *preparing a way for the Lord* and making *straight the paths* for his footsteps.

2d. This kingdom is distinguished from the governments of this world, in regard to the *time* of commencing its restraints. It begins with the early growth of sin; whereas the authorities of this world cannot take cognizance of sin, until it has become so strong, and of such mature age, as to break over all bounds, and boldly show itself the enemy of civil society. Though sin is inherent in the human heart, yet in its first exercises, it is comparatively weak and feeble; but it grows and increases by exercise, until, in process of time, it breaks over all bounds and becomes notorious, in its overt acts upon the peace of community. Then, and not till then, can the secular arm be raised to restrain it; but then, in most cases, the restraint comes in too late, either to reform the transgressor, or prevent injury to society. It is true, the criminal may now be confined or executed, but this does not remunerate the public or individuals, for the loss already sustained; and from the imperfec-

tion of civil government, some loss must have been sustained, before the criminal could be arraigned; though sin long before this, might have been laying its plans, and gaining strength for their execution. Nor, after sinful propensities have thus become strengthened, is the punishment likely to prove salutary, in effecting a reformation in the transgressor. Therefore we say, the secular arm is raised too late to save the community from loss, or to reform the sinner. Religion, on the contrary, comes in to exercise her power, while the half formed purpose is yet feeble and wavering, while the desire is yet growing. It crushes the serpent of sinful desire, in the egg; it strangles the young Hercules of unholy passion, in the cradle. It is thus the religion of Jesus Christ exercises a most timely and salutary influence upon the heart, fitting its subjects, not only for the service of God, but for the service of the state.

3d. This kingdom is distinguished from the governments of this world, in regard to the *place* of commencing its restraints. For Christ, by the influences of his gospel, commences restraining his subjects within, at the root of sin; whereas the restraints of worldly governments, are only imposed upon the outward and open fruits of sin. The outbreakings and overflowings of moral evil may be resisted, by the strong dykes of civil authority; but, like another Elisha, religion casts in the salt of grace, to heal the foun-

tain. Despair of success or fear of punishment may for a time, restrain the restless spirit, but still it reigns in the heart, and is watching its opportunity for criminal indulgence; but the spirit of the gospel, is stronger than this strong man armed, it enters into the soul and binds the strong man of sin, and spoils his goods. This influence enters into the secret closets and visits the inward council chambers of the soul, and there it "reasons of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." O could we get admittance to this secret parley, what should we there see? what an influence should we there see exerted? When criminal desire claims indulgence; when lust burns; when anger rages; when revenge seeks retaliation; when envy rankles; when pride swells; when covetousness gripes the heart, and ambition moves the soul; in short, when any one or more of the unholy passions, stirs up the soul to any thing unlawful, then who is that, with aspect so dignified, with authority so commanding, and with eloquence so persuasive, standing amidst the dark and mutinous group, commanding and entreating, threatening and promising, expostulating and reasoning, until every wicked and corrupt Felix, and every proud and wanton Drusilla trembles? O it is the genius of the gospel of Christ! she stands there, from morning till night, and from night till morning, restraining, and sometimes changing, the wicked purpose of the

heart. And have you, my brethren, never witnessed such a scene? Though not in others, yet doubtless you have in yourselves. What is it, when temptation presented itself in all its most plausible and promising forms, what is it that restrained you? Was it the fear of civil authority? did the secular arm lay its restraint upon you? No, you are conscious that this, in most cases, had no influence upon you. But it was because the inward kingdom of God came nigh unto you, with its restraining grace. And whatever you may think of the natural integrity of your hearts, however much you may pride yourselves, that you are not as other men, you owe it to this same influence, that you are moral men and useful citizens. So far as you have escaped the influence of unholy passions, so far as you have been submissive to good government, and useful to community, so far you are bound to say, "by the grace of God, I am what I am." And is this influence of no consequence to good government? Is it not indeed of vital importance to its very existence? for though the powerful arm of government were able, for a time to keep the unprincipled man so far within the bounds of restraint, by the penalties and discouragements with which it hedges him round, as that he never comes under the lash of its penal sanctions; yet how much mischief is done to society, by an evil disposed individual, who is barely kept under by the power of the

law? Whatever is loose in example, whatever is indecent in language, whatever is corrupting to youth, all flow out of this kennel of moral filth. It is a moral, and infectious disease, which, were it not for the direct or more remote influence of the gospel, would sooner or later corrode and destroy the body politic. For human laws cannot reach the seat of the difficulty. Who has ever found, in the most perfect system of political law, any thing that will answer this purpose? Do any of these codes forbid anger? or a lustful look? or an uncharitable thought? or a haughty spirit? or a hard heart? And could such laws be executed, if made? Yet all these are forbidden, by the laws of Christ's kingdom. For these laws are exceeding broad, extending to the inner man, and discerning the thoughts of the heart. Witness Christ's sermon on the mount; witness in short, the whole tenor of the gospel requirements. And does any one think this a dead letter, a powerless system? Is the gospel, like the governments of this world, incapable of executing such laws? This may be determined, by noticing in the next proposition,

4th. That the kingdom of Christ is distinguished from the governments of this world, in the manner of exercising its influence. This *kingdom*, says Christ, *is within you*: by which we are to understand, not only that this kingdom adapts its laws to the mind and takes cogni-

zance of the thoughts of the heart, as we have already noticed, but also, that it exercises a *power* over the mind. "There be some of them that stand here," says Christ at a certain time, "which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come *with power*." And not only were Christ's *words with power*, when he was on earth, and not only did he then give "to as many as received him the *power* to become the sons of God," but even after his reserrection and ascension, the "gospel was the *power* of God unto *salvation*, to every one that believed;" for it came to the people, "not in word only, but also in *power*, and in the *Holy Ghost*, and in *much assurance*." And from the apostolic age to the present day, the true spiritual kingdom of Christ has maintained this same energetic character. It has a strength to arrest the mind, and light to convict, and power to condemn, and energy in all its operations. It takes hold of the mind with an authority which has made kings tremble, and vile transgressors quake, like an aspen leaf. The Holy Spirit does this, by its immediate operations, and by the exhibitions it makes to the soul, of Gospel truth; especially of the purity and sanctions of the divine law. In connection with this, the sinner sees his own impurity and his exposed situation. He sees the judgment to come, and its awful retributions, he sees the impossibility of escaping. Though there are many sins of which human laws cannot take cognizance; though

there are many ways on earth of eluding justice; though in committing many of his sins, the secrecy of midnight shrouds him, and thick darkness covers him; yet for all these, he sees God will bring him, into judgment, and there will be no escape. In short, the kingdom of Jesus Christ brings all its influence from the other world, and there are planted those engines which operate so powerfully upon this. There the king sits enthroned, thence he issues out his mandates, and to that court, all his precepts are made returnable. There all his subjects are held to answer, and there they are to be "judged according to the deeds done in the body." This it is that throws an awful grandeur about the religion of Jesus Christ, and it is this which gives it an influence upon the minds of men, surpassing every thing else. These are the truths which are set home by the Holy Spirit, upon the heart and conscience of the transgressor, and make him tremble under their influence. And frequently, being thus alarmed of his danger, and sorrowing for his sins, he throws open the door of his heart, for the entrance of the gospel kingdom, and yields himself up to its renovating power. Thus it is, that the spirit carries on his work of reformation. He turns back the tide of nature's current; he unclasps the iron grasp of ruling passion; yea he brings in upon the dark chaos of the corrupted mind, a new and blooming creation, fresh and bright as primitive para-

dise. This is what the gospel calls regeneration, and is in fact, the first establishment of this inward kingdom in the soul. Of such a mysterious, inward, supernatural change, some are in doubt, yea, some who appear to manifest a respect and a veneration for the scriptures. But why should they doubt when, even leaving scripture testimony out of the question, matter of fact is so clear upon this point? Witness the effects of this gospel, upon individuals and communities. And to do this, we need not go beyond the limits of our own state. I appeal to the candid and judicious; has there not been, within a few years, a great change for the better, not only in individuals, but in many towns and villages throughout our land; and that too, through the influence of the gospel? Have not these changes sometimes been sudden, and unaccountable upon any natural principles. Let the unbeliever talk of high wrought excitement; let the caveller point to the hypocrite and the apostate, of which we confess there are too many; yet it still remains an undeniable truth, that this reform has been great, glorious and permanent; it is the foundation of our morality, the spring to our christian benevolence, and I will add, the bulwark of our government.

Look again at the powerful effects of this gospel of the kingdom, upon the hearts of the poor African slave; the stupid Hottentot; the wild Indian. Can the power of the gospel be ques-

tioned, in any of these cases? We might collect together a vast number of historical facts, in relation to this subject, by which the power of the gospel might be illustrated, but we will confine ourselves to two instances, much in point—one among the Wyandot indians, of upper Sandusky (Ohio,) and the other among the Chippewas, on the Grand River, U. C. In the former place, about three hundred and twenty, and in the latter, about one hundred have been evidently made subjects of this kingdom. These were, a short time since, most degraded heathens; wild, wicked and intemperate. But now they have become christianized and measurably civilized. Among the Chippewas, the Mississaugah tribe, is represented the “most intemperate, filthy and wretched,” of any of our frontier tribes; and of these, about 90 are reformed, and exhibit, it is said, a pattern of sobriety and devotion. And what is more striking, these changes have been effected simply by preaching Christ to them, and the effects were the very same as when the gospel was preached, eighteen hundred years ago; the word was with *power*, the hearers were pricked to the heart, and they cried out, “What must we do to be saved?” Now can any doubt, that a kingdom like this, has power in it? It marches directly up to a wild, drunken, degraded Indian’s heart, and makes its successful attack upon the very evils of his moral nature: And proves itself to be the very same power which ancient-

ly, arrested the wild man, among the tombs, who ~~was~~ presently found, "sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind." And this is the power which is exerted on all the subjects of this kingdom.

Here then is the difference between Christ's kingdom, and the kingdoms and governments of this world; secular power can only give the law, but Christ gives not only the law to his subjects, but also the power and disposition to keep it. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin, in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled" in the subjects of his kingdom. "For the law of the spirit of life hath made *them* free from the law of sin and death." And here too we see the aid which this kingdom affords to all good governments. For when a man is made better by the gospel he is prepared for every good word and work. He is better for all the relations of life; he is the better magistrate, he is the better citizen.

5th. This kingdom of Christ is distinguished from the governments of this world, in that it presents objects suited to man's capacities and desires, and affords comforts, suited to his lowest and extremest miseries.

There is a spirit, an active, aspiring principle in man, which cannot be broken down by oppression, nor satisfied by indulgence.

"He has a soul of vast desires,

"It burns within with restless fires."

Desires, which no earthly good can satisfy; fires which no waters of affliction or discouragement can quench. And it is from this his nature, that society derives all its interest, and here also lies all its danger. This spirit is at once the terror of tyrants, and the destroyer of republics. To form some idea of its strength, let us look at it in its different conditions, both when it is depressed, and when it is exalted. See when it is bent down, for a time, by the iron grasp and leaden sceptre of tyranny, cramping and curtailing and hedging in the soul, and foiling it in all its attempts to break from its bonds and assert its native independence. In these cases, the noble spirit, like a wild beast in the toils, sinks down at times, into a sullen inactivity, only that it may rise again, when exhausted nature is a little restored; to rush, as hope excites or madness impels, in stronger paroxysms against the cords which bind it down. This is seen in the mobs and rebellions of the most besotted and enslaved nations. Witness the repeated convulsions in Ireland, that degraded and oppressed country. Neither desolating armies, nor numerous garrisons, nor the most rigorous administration, enforced by thousands of public executions, can break the spirit of that restless people. Witness Greece; generations have passed away since the warriors of Greece have had their feet put in fetters, and the race of heroes had appa-

rently become extinct; and the Grecian lyre had long been unstrung, and her lights put out. Her haughty masters thought her spirit was dead; but it was not dead, it only slept. In a moment as it were, we saw all Greece in arms; she shook off her slumbers, and, rushed with phrenzy and hope, upon seeming impossibilities, to conquer or to die. And though the mother and the daughter, as well as the father and the son, have fought and fallen in the common cause, until her population grows thin; though Missilonghi and many other strong holds are fallen, until her fortifications are few and feeble, though christian nations have looked on with a cruel inactivity, without lending their needed aid, yet the spirit of Greece is no more subdued than at the commencement of the contest. It cannot be subdued.

Look at the negro slave, who is said to be among the most stupid of the race of men. He is degraded at his birth, he is degraded throughout his life, so that not a ray of science is allowed to enlighten his mind, and not a spark of ambition is allowed to be kindled up in his soul: till one would think there was not enough of native fire left in his bosom, to excite him to a venturous action. But we have heard, not only of individuals rising up and destroying their oppressors or bursting from their yokes, but we have heard of the inhabitants of a large island, rising from the lowest servitude, mastering their

masters, butchering and expelling them, and raising up a government and a commonwealth of their own, and establishing themselves in a rank, among the nations of the earth.

We see then that man has a spirit, which is not easily broken down, by oppression. Let us inquire, whether it can be more easily satisfied by indulgence. And in every step of this inquiry, we shall find that no miser ever yet had gold enough; no office seeker ever yet had honor enough; no conqueror ever yet subdued kingdoms enough. When the rich man had filled his store-houses, he must pull down and build bigger. When Cæsar had conquered all his enemies, he must enslave his friends. When Bonaparte had become the Emperor of France, he aspired to the throne of all Europe. Facts, a thousand facts, in every age and among all classes, prove, that such is the ambitious nature of the soul, such the increasing compass of its vast desires; that the material universe, with all its vastness, richness and variety, cannot satisfy it. Nor is it in the power of the governments of this world, in their most perfect forms, so to interest the feelings, so to regulate the desires, so to restrain the passions, or so to divert, or charm, or chain the souls of a whole community, but that these latent and ungovernable fires will sooner or later burst out and endanger the whole body politic.

I know it has been supposed, by the politicians,

at in an intelligent and well educated community, a government might be so constituted, by a proper balance of power, by equal representation, and by leaving open the avenues to office and wealth, for a fair and honorable competition among all classes, as to perpetuate the system to the latest posterity. Such a system of government, it is acknowledged, is the most likely to continue; but all these political and literary helps, unaided by the kingdom of Christ, will not secure any community from revolution and ruin. And he knows but little of the nature of man, who judges otherwise. What has been the fate of the ancient republics? They have been dissolved, by this same restless and disorganizing spirit, of which we have been speaking. And do we not see the same dangerous spirit, in our own comparatively happy and strongly constituted republic? The wise framers of our excellent political institutions, like the eclectick philosophers, have selected the best parts, out of all the systems which preceded them; and to these have added others, according to the suggestions of their own wisdom, or the leadings of providence, and have formed the whole into a constitution, the most perfect, the world has ever witnessed. Here every thing that is rational in political liberty, is enjoyed; here the most salutary checks and restraints, that have yet been discovered, are laid upon men in office. Here the road to honor

and wealth are open to all; and here is general intelligence. But here man is found to possess the same nature, as elsewhere. And the stirrings of his restless spirit, have already disturbed the peace of society, and portend future convulsions. Party spirit is begotten; ambitious views are engendered, and fed, and inflamed; many are running the race for office; rivals are envied; characters are aspersed; animosities are enkindled; and the whole community are disturbed, by the electioneering contest. In proof of this, we need only refer to our late presidential election. This alone will show us, that the higher the elevation at which men aim, the more restless, troublesome and dangerous do their aspiring spirits become. No meanness is foregone, no calumny is too glaring, no venality is too base, when the mind is inflamed with strong desire, and elated with the hope of success, in the pursuit of some favorite object. And when the doubtful question is decided, it avails nothing. Disappointment sours the mind, and often produces the bitterest enmity and the most settled and systematic opposition, in the unsuccessful party; while success but imperfectly satisfies the mind of the more fortunate. And if no other influence comes in, to curb the turbulent spirits of men, besides that which is found in our general intelligence, and constitutional checks, probably, at no great distance of time, such convulsions may be witnessed in our

now happy country, as shall make the ears of him that heareth it tingle, and the eyes of him that seeth it weep blood. State may be arrayed against state, section against section, and party against party, till all the horrors of civil war, may desolate our land. Are there no grounds for such fears? Already the partisans of a murderer, in one state, have disorganized the whole judicial system, and put a serious check, for a time, to the administration of justice. The high spirit of a governor, in another state, has threatened opposition, and almost defiance, to the constituted authorities of the general government. Already disgraceful disorder has been countenanced, from mere party feelings, in the highest, and what ought to be the most dignified legislative council of the nation. Already the capitol of the nation it is said, is a place of much intrigue and political chicanery, to secure office and promote the interests of parties. Already office seekers, in different parts of the country, unblushingly recommend themselves to notice, and palm themselves upon the people, by every electioneering manoeuvre; and in this way, such an excitement is produced, in many parts of the union, as makes the contending parties almost like mobs, assailing each other. Only let the publick sense become vitiated, and let a number of causes unite to produce a general excitement, and all our fair political proportions would fall before the spirit of party,

as certainly and as ruinously, as the fair proportions of Italian architecture fell before the ancient Goths and Vandals.

And is there nothing that will satisfy the mind of man? Has heaven placed a race of beings upon this earth, and constituted them with souls of such capacity, and with desires of such compass, that nothing in this wide orb, can fill them? Does our Creator take delight in giving an impetus to the human mind, which drives it irresistably over all the fields of fatal experiment, spreading desolation in its tract, through all the fairest works of God? There is a remedy. Amidst all the commotions and agitations of earthly governments; amidst the feverish heat and burning thirst of this world; amidst its rivalships and its enmities, the restlessness of its desires and the raging of its passions, "the God of heaven hath set up a kingdom." In this kingdom there is no rivalship and no disappointment; all the subjects are candidates for the highest honors, and all win, who run. Here those "who hunger and thirst are filled;" filled with that "righteousness and peace and joy, in the Holy Ghost," which are the peculiar properties of this kingdom: a "peace that is like a river," a "righteousness that is like the waves of the sea," and a joy that is "unspeakable and full of glory." The subject of this kingdom, therefore is at rest; he says of its joys, they are enough, its treasures are satis-

factory, its prospects are ravishing. And will such a man disturb the peace of society, to obtain honors from man? Will he exchange his peace of conscience, for the joys of this world? No;

"On all the grov'ling kings of earth,

"With pity he looks down;

"And claims, by virtue of his birth,

"A never fading crown.

He is now able to view things more in their true light; the fascinating charms of this world are broken, and he sees its comparative worthlessness; he sees the value of the soul and the vast importance of eternal things. That beauty which charms the angels, and binds them to the throne of God, is measurably revealed to him, and he is ravished thereby. The very language of his heart is,

"The blessed Jesus is my Lord my love,

"He is my king; from him I would not move—

"Away then all ye objects that divert,

"And seek to draw, from my dear Lord, my heart.

"That uncreated beauty which hath gain'd

"My ravish'd heart, hath all your glory stain'd;

"His loveliness my soul hath prepossessed,

"And left no room for any other guest.

It is true, there are different degrees, in the privileges of this kingdom, and the soul will be interested therein and influenced thereby, in proportion to its advancement. And those in the lower degrees are more easily drawn aside. And even the highest, in spiritual attainments,

may, through neglect, suffer their minds to become darkened and their love to grow cold; and then the mind is prepared to drink again, into the spirit of this world. It is also true, that there are hypocrites and false professors, among the number of visible subjects, in this kingdom. Still, neither the little engagedness of some nor the apostacy of others, nor the hypocrisy of others, can destroy the truth of the position laid down. Christ, in the kingdom of his grace, can fill the capacities and satisfy the desires of the human soul, while the good things of this world cannot.

Equally adequate are the blessings of this kingdom, to relieve man's lowest and extremest miseries. For as the king himself, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame and has set down at the right hand of God," so his subjects do the same, and with the same prospect of reward. For one of the articles, in the bill of rights of this kingdom is, *All things shall work together for the good of the subjects.* Yea, and their spirit is supported, under the most trying circumstances, by the assurance, that "these light afflictions, which are for a moment, work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." There is something also, in the very nature of this kingdom as it exists in the soul, aside from the prospect of future reward, which soothes the mind, in its bitterest anguish. A something which

cannot be described, to those who have not felt it. For this is a joy with which the stranger intermeddleth not.

And there is an enlargement of mind, imparted by this gospel, which enables the soul, in the midst of the most straitened circumstances of this world, to "rest and expatiate, in the world to come." Hence he needs not revenge himself upon the world, by imprecations and outrages; he resorts not to plunder and to theft, to satisfy his desires and better his condition; his feelings are not depressed and mortified and stung and goaded, till he rages with fiendlike madness, or sinks down in brutal stupidity. No, he has a dignity about him, which savors of his royal birth, a calmness that savors of the peace of that kingdom which is *within him*; an elevation of mind, produced by his constant communion with the Holy Ghost; and a confidence, which is not easily shaken, because it has taken fast hold upon eternal things.

And is this a man "for treason, stratagems and spoils?" Will he be a disorganizer in society? and a dangerous man in community?

6th. Christ's kingdom is distinguished from all others, in that its principles and operations, tend to the perfection and permanency of all good governments; but the principles and operations of worldly governments, tend to deterioration and dissolution.

The truth of this proposition is seen, in what has been already advanced. For it must follow conclusively, that a kingdom perfect in its origin and operations, and so well suited, in its influence and provisions, to the nature, circumstances and capacities of man, will make its subjects the permanent supporters of all that is good. Yea, it effectually reforms that disorganizing spirit in man, which otherwise operates, like a universal menstruum, to decompose every political association. But it is not designed under this proposition, to show the tendency of the principles of this kingdom, from the nature of them, for this has been already done; but it is designed to show that the spirit of christianity has contributed more than any thing else, to introduce correct views of civil government. And christians have been the most active and successful, in establishing and maintaining the civil and political rights of man.

In proof of this, reference may be made to the revival of pure religion, at the reformation. For a number of centuries before this event, England and Scotland, Holland and Germany were groaning and grovelling under the pressure and darkness of absolute power. But the light of the reformation was the dawning of liberty's luminous day. From that time to this, the principles of civil liberty have been gaining ground. Scarcely a century had elapsed, before England and Scotland had become politically regenerat-

ed. And though the historic facts connected with these events, cannot now be detailed, yet whoever examines the history of those times, must acknowledge, that "the puritans and covenanters were the fathers of liberty, in these kingdoms; the politicians and cavaliers, would have been its death." In about the same time, Holland became free and powerful; and a great part of Germany was measurably emancipated from its political thralldom. And it is of great consequence to this argument to note, that where pure religion did not revive, even though the people were equally refined and enlightened, there was no revival of political liberty. Italy, France and Spain still continued under the yoke, though in other respects, save in their religion, they were as well prepared perhaps, for improvements in their civil governments as the nations before mentioned. France did, it is true, share partially in the religious reform of that day, and in the same proportion that it shared in this, the spirit of political reformation was begotten among the people. The Huguenots, who were the religious reformers in that kingdom, possessed unquestionably, more correct views of true liberty, and more prudence to introduce it, than all the philosophers and politicians that wrote and bustled, in the French revolution. And had they been encouraged and protected, they would have operated like leaven, upon the whole of the body politick and eccle-

siastic, until they had brought about a salutary reform. The Magna Charta of the people's rights, would have "grown with their growth, and strengthened with their strength." Of this, the reigning dynasty were aware, and therefore they butchered and banished them, until this noble race, more noble by far than their royal persecutors, were almost extinct in France; and their tomb was the grave of French liberty. It is true, the public mind had received an impetus which, strengthened by the example of other nations, and especially of these United States, continued its influence, long after the moving cause had ceased to exist. But this influence soon became corrupted, by the polluted channels through which it flowed. The Huguenots being driven from the kingdom by exile and by death, the infidel philosophers took the ark of liberty into their own hands, and undertook to conduct it to its place. But this was a work to which they had never been consecrated; and the Genius of liberty, offended to have her cause supported by such profane hands, fled from them; and to avenge the insult offered her, she sent licentiousness, the only proper companion of infidels, to throw among them *firebrands, arrows and death*. The result is well known. And now let the candid enquiry be made, why did France fail so fatally in her struggles for liberty? She was not making an untried experiment; for she had the successful example of

other nations before her. Many of her leading men had been well instructed in the school of American politicks, and they were men of learning and general intelligence. Why did they fail? Their infidelity and impiety were undoubtedly the cause. If they had sent pious and faithful men throughout the nation, to disseminate among them the principles of the gospel kingdom, and if these principles had been permitted to have their natural and unrestrained influence, I doubt not but France might now have stood preeminent, among the number of free and independent republicks.

In further proof of our proposition, let us enquire into the origin of our own free government. And we shall find it originated, in the principles of the kingdom of Christ. The germ of our tree of liberty was produced in the reformation already noticed. It budded in the christian church in Europe, and was brought, by our pilgrim fathers, to these shores; it was planted in the midst of their devotions, watered by their tears, guarded by their pious vigilance, and defended by their christian valor. On this subject it would be unnecessary to enlarge, even if the limits of this discourse would allow of it; for he must have paid but little attention to the origin of our political institutions, too little to have any share in their administration, not to know, that it was religion which prepared the way for this republick; religion enlightened the minds

and directed the hands of those who laid the foundation; it kept down the passions and directed the spirits of those who raised the superstructure; yea, religion is the cement which unites all the parts together. In short it may be truly said that the bible, the statute book of Christ's kingdom, the constitution of his spiritual realm, contains such excellent sentiments upon the rights of man, and gives such enlarged and ennobling views to the human mind, that it becomes dangerous to the pretended divine right of kings, and subversive of the absolute authority of tyrants. And this truth exists not merely, in theory but rests on matter of fact and is confirmed by actual experience.

In concluding but little need be said by way of inference, since the different connections and bearings of the subject have been noticed, as the different parts were examined. If the foregoing views of this subject however be correct, two thoughts naturally suggest themselves on which it may be proper to dwell for a moment.

1. The subjects of Christ's kingdom stand in a very essential relation to the cause of political liberty. It has been supposed that the pious had little or nothing to do with the affairs of the nation, and that to take a part in the bustle of the political world, was contrary to the spirit of that kingdom of which they were subjects. It is true christians have no right to enter into the intrigues of many, styling themselves pol-

iticans—they have no right to help on or connive at the barter and sale of offices, as is the practice of some. Nor is it consistent with that kingdom, which is not of this world, to seek ecclesiastical preferments and emoluments, by meddling with the affairs of state; nor to support a man merely because he is of the same religious party or favors and supports that party. Nevertheless, in the political world, they have a great work to do, and much is depending upon them. From the part which has been already taken by christians, in promoting good government, and from the success which has thus far attended their exertions, we see the necessity that they continue in their work, until the world shall become politically regenerated. Indeed it appears to me, that all the blessings of the millennial day, so glowingly portrayed in ancient prophecy, are to be introduced in this way. The very letter of some of these predictions implies this. “And in the days of these kings,” saith the Lord to Daniel, “shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. And again. “The saints of the most high shall take the kingdom, and shall possess the kingdom forever, and forever and ever.” Now in what way is this to be accomplished? Will it be by introducing an ecclesiastical gov-

ernment, throughout the earth; and ruling the nations of this world by spiritual Lords; and making all men amenable to an earthly court of conscience? No; in this sense Christ's "kingdom is not of this world." It will be by giving the gospel a universal spread, and a universal influence; by introducing into all nations and into all their political operations, the civilizing, humanizing and soul-controlling spirit of the kingdom of Christ; and by imparting, through the principles of this kingdom, liberal views of the rights of man; and by destroying, through the power of the gospel, all vain and dangerous ambition and lust of power on the part of rulers, and the spirit of insubordination, on the part of the ruled. This work is already begun; and begun too, as we have shown, by the "saints of the most high God." They are already beginning to take the kingdom of this world, *to break in pieces and destroy* all those despotic principles, by which the nations have been governed. And they are marching forward to greater and more glorious conquests, in the moral and in the political world. But their conquests are not like the battles of earthly warriors, "with confused noise and garments rolled in blood;" for the weapons of their warfare are spiritual and "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought,

to the obedience of Christ." And when Christ reigns by the principles of his grace, over the hearts of men, controlling the minds of rulers, and directing the councils of states, and enlightening and reforming the minds of all; when under this influence, those free institutions which have been commenced, shall have been brought to their highest earthly perfection, and shall have become universal, then shall Christ truly reign on the earth; war shall cease; truth and righteousness shall prevail; "and the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Such is the relation, in which the subjects of Christ's kingdom stand, to the cause of political liberty. And this very naturally leads to a second reflection.

2d. Statesmen, and all concerned in civil government, stand in an interesting relation to the kingdom of Christ. If they would accomplish their object, they should act, at all times in accordance with its principles; feel their dependence upon its helps, and their accountability to its requirements. For by how much the principles of christianity are essential to good government, by so much are the agents in such a government, dependent upon those principles; and by how much it is essential to chris-

tians to interest themselves in the affairs of state, by so much it is important, that all statesmen be christians. In how interesting a light does this present religion to rulers ! It presses its importance upon them, not only as men, but as public men. Not only in the part they act, as personally responsible to God for themselves ; but also, in the part they act for community, by which they are made responsible for the good of society.

RESPECTED RULERS,

In view of the importance of this subject, and its interesting relation to the circumstances in which we now are ; permit me without a separate reference to the different grades of office, to address you with due respect but with great freedom of speech. A freedom which you have in fact conferred upon me, by the station in which you have placed me. For the custom which you have established, of opening your legislative proceedings by a religious discourse, was never designed it is presumed, as a mere compliment to the clerical order. Nor was it designed to give direct instruction, on political subjects ; since, for this service, the gospel minister cannot ordinarily, be supposed to be qualified. But if I have not altogether mistaken the subject, this laudable custom was introduced, for the purpose at which I have been aiming, in the present discourse ; to show the importance of religion to good government,

and to impress its importance especially upon the minds of rulers. The design of your coming, first of all, to the shrine of devotion, is, that you may get your hearts so imbued with the sound principles of Christ's spiritual kingdom, and your minds so engrossed by the soul elevating truths of the gospel, that you might not, in your subsequent proceedings, be easily swayed, by personal ambition, or party spirit, or local prejudices. To all these you are greatly exposed, in your present stations; and against these you cannot be too much guarded. But what guards are sufficient, if you are not guarded by personal religion? It is doubtless common, for men in office to look forward to the time, when the bustle of life shall be over, and its active scenes shall have gone by; when they shall have done with office and honor, in this world, then they hope to share in the blessings of Christ's kingdom, and become partakers of the hope of the gospel; for they too, wish "to die the death of the righteous, and have their last end like his." But they ought to understand, that religion is of vital importance, in the very work in which they are engaged. This alone can give them the government of themselves, and prepare them to act with the strictest impartiality, and integrity, in behalf of the publick. This, alone, as we have seen, can give them correct views of the rights of man, and of political liberty. This will make their influence salutary, not only in

the state councils, but in all the social circles, in which they move; and this alone can fit them for a seat, in the kingdom of glory. If then there is any interest in the great political and moral reform that is going on in the world; if there is any value in political liberty; if any beauty in moral virtue; above all, if there is any excellency in the kingdom of Christ; if any worth to the soul; or any thing desirable in eternal salvation, *think on these things*. The things of time are important, but only important as they stand connected with eternity. The operations of the governments of this world are important; but only important, as they stand connected with the kingdom of Christ. It appears to me, that the most high threw out this earth, midway in the immensity of space, as a theatre, on which to make an exhibition of his gospel kingdom. Upon this exhibition, the inhabitants of the upper and nether world are looking, with great interest; for *angels desire to look into these things*, and devils tremble and rage at these displays of grace and glory. Yea and perhaps the planets around, with their various inhabitants, take an interest in this exhibition; else why did "the morning stars sing together when the foundations of this *earthly theatre* were fastened, and the corner stone thereof was laid?" Or why did that "star in the east," as if drawn by an attraction superior to those joint forces that kept it in its orbit, leave its accustomed

tract, to hover over the humble cradle of Zion's infant king? What a dignity do these considerations give to the scenes that are acting here! And on this grand theatre you have a part to perform. And although the space you occupy, and the parts you perform, are comparatively small, nevertheless they are important, not only as they relate to yourselves, but to community. "Therefore being compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," and sharing in a work of so much interest; how important that you move circumspectly! Especially since the Great Manager himself is looking on, with eyes that read the secrets of the heart; and more especially, since the whole scene is fast opening up to that final catastrophe, when each "shall be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body." May you be guided by the light of truth and blessed with every needful aid by the king of kings; and, *when the chief Shepherd shall appear, may you receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

JUN 17 1921